Vol. III. Numb. 14.

The EXAMINER.

From Monday *January* 5, to Friday *January* 9, 1712.

——— *Pacem te poſcimus omnes.* Ovid.

GREAT BRITAIN, not many Years ago, was a Country the moſt remarkable for *Hoſpitality* of any under Heaven. This Virtue, which by old Cuſtom, always choſe the Seaſon of *Chriſtmas* to diſplay it ſelf in, had ſeveral good effects upon our People. It contributed very much to the keeping up a very fair Correſpondence between our Gentry, made Humanity and good Humour circulate, and diffus'd Happineſs through a whole Neighbourhood. Nor was it leſs uſeful in ſmoothing and refining the Minds of the Populace, and keeping them in a due Subordination to their Superiors; which, according to the true generous Nature of the *Britiſh* Genius, was better preſerved by theſe Annual Returns of Complacency, than by the moſt ſtately Diſtance and affected Majeſty: For great Men muſt be taſted as well as ſeen, if they expect to be the Favourites of the People. But upon the increaſe of the publick Taxes, the Fat of the Land ſeems to have been drain'd to make room for the Sinews of War; and *Hoſpitality* is fled to the Borders of our Iſland, to *Cornwall*, *Wales*, and the Banks of the *Tweed*; whilſt *Ambition*, in her diſguiſe, makes a *Triennial* Tour through all our Cities and Towns Corporate, only to put the Country in mind of paſt Pleaſures and Enjoyments. At the ſame time, ſince Parties have rag'd amongſt us, and ſo many new Originals of Government have been bandy'd about, we begin to forget the old One, that we are ſociable Creatures: Our *Hoſpitality* is little better than a Rendevouz for War; and our Viſits are like thoſe of Spies, or thoſe of ſome among the Fair Sex, who only go abroad to glean up Matter for Scandal. When we now and then get together over a Bottle, we cannot help mingling every Glaſs with that ſilly Ingredient a *Toaſt*, which ſowres the richeſt Wine, and introduces a new ſort of *Orgyes*, where the *Bacchinals* grow mad before they are drunk. Upon this View my Wonder ceaſes, when I conſider with how much Reaſon and Juſtice, thoſe Men, who have fill'd us with Jealouſies and Diſtractions, ruin'd our Peace at Home, and ſquander'd away the Nation's Wealth in an unneceſſary War abroad, and who have made us thus Ill-natur'd and Unhoſpitable, ſhould thereby become the common Scorn and Deteſtation. Tho' they boaſt of their ill-gotten Wealth, and upon the Strength of their Plunder inſult the Landed Gentry, yet they are ſo far from attempting to reſtore this Virtue, which was loſt by their Ill-management, and, as they ſeem to tell us, none but themſelves are able to revive; that they are either reſolved to carry their Riches into another Country, or ſpend it here upon their Vices, to whom indeed they owe it, and it is the only juſt Payment they ever deſign to make. Hence their Equipages, Dreſſes, Tables and Furniture, even now they are diſcarded, are full of romantick Splendor and Greatneſs; and their Gardens and Edifices almoſt as amazing as their Devaſtations: They live at ſuch a rate, as if they really intended to prevent a *Reſumption*.

On the other hand, it is not at all ſurprizing, that the truly great Men now in Power, ſhould, notwithſtanding all the little Artifices of their Enemies, keep entire poſſeſſion of the Hearts of the People, and every Day enlarge their Dominions; ſince all the dawning of our Happineſs bears date with their Riſe; and by bringing the Bleſſing of *Peace* nearer to our View, they have given us freſh Aſſurances, that Concord, Plenty and *Hoſpitality*, will once more return and dwell among us. The Virtues they were born to reſtore, are owing as much to their Example as their Conduct; and they ſeem to have brought about one glorious Incident, which never any Miniſtry could accompliſh before, ſince the firſt *four* Years after the *Reſtoration*, I mean an Union of Intereſts between the Court and Country, the laſt deſirable Bleſſing that was wanting to compleat our Felicity.

The bliſsful Proſpect and Scenes of various Pleaſure, which at preſent fill the Minds, and take up moſt of the Converſation of our People, have redoubled the Mirth and Gaiety of this Seaſon of the Year. One meets a new Feſtival in almoſt every Countenance. To ſee *Great Britain*, which was lately made the *Butt* and Property of *petty* Princes and *Penſionaries*, now actually preſiding over the Fate and Fortunes of *Europe*; to have the *Cornucopia* hovering o'er our Heads, and juſt ready to be pour'd out upon us, and a *Peace* within our reach, not only *Safe* and *Honourable*, but fully anſwering the Demands of a victorious Nation, is a State ſo crouded with Enjoyments, ſuch as one half at leaſt of the preſent Generation were ſcarce ever allow'd to Taſte, that the Exceſſes of our preſent Satisfaction may eaſily be accounted for: Nor is it ſurprizing to ſee ſo many Days ſet apart for the *Rehearſal* of thoſe Rejoicings, which are to adorn the Coming Holiday. We are arriv'd at the Pleaſure of enjoying even our Diviſions, and making merry with thoſe ſenſeleſs Fears and ill-concerted Lies, which an unnatural ſpiteful Party are inceſſantly buzzing amongſt us. There can be no greater Happineſs than to be able to give the beſt Reaſons for the Love of one's Country; and I begin to incline to their Opinion, who think it a ſort of *Baniſhment* to be oblig'd to keep *Chriſtmas* at *Aix la Chapelle*. Publick *Credit* gets ground every Day, and convinces us of its dependence on pacifick Meaſures: And by the late Struggle in the City we are confirmed, that the true *Genius* of our Populace is not to be warp'd or ſet wrong by a thouſand little Practices of Falſhood and Inſinuation. We muſt impute it to a noble Diſdain of theſe mean Artifices, that the *Ambaſſador* of a *generous* Enemy was receiv'd with Applauſe, whilſt the Miniſters of our pretended Friends paſs'd by unregarded, becauſe they came with the real Character of *Publick Spies*: And their Secret Cabals with the *Junta*, often brought to my Mind the Image of the *Court* of *Breda*, during the Exile of King *Charles*, where his Majeſty took up one part of the *Inn*, whilſt the other Quarter was the reſidence of ſome publick Envoy to the *Commonwealth* of *England*.

For my own part, tho' I am naturally *Saturnine*, and ready enough to foreſtall the Cenſures of my Enemies, by owning the influence of that *leaden* Planet; yet I cannot

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cannot forbear falling in with the Diverſions of the Seaſon: And whatever ſome may think of thoſe little Sports and Entertainments, which ſerve to paſs away the Evening, they ceaſe to be Trifles, when we improve them to the advantage of Society, and to the promotion of good Humour and mutual Endearment. When we are brought to agree in little Trifles, we may perhaps be drawn on to ſhew as much Complaiſance in great Ones: And I have often thought I have been as well employ'd in making a Party at *Drawing the Lottery, Pictures and Motto's*, or any other innocent Amuſement proper for a Winter Evening, as if I had laid out the very ſame Time and Pains at *Tom's*, in diſcuſſing that grand Queſtion in Hiſtory, *Whether* Ariſtides *were really a* Whig *or a* Tory; or maintaining as ſtrenuouſly at *Young* Man's, *That Fighting for Fighting's ſake, ought to be encourag'd by all wiſe States and Communities.*

Not many Nights ago I happen'd into very good Company, where it was propoſed to divert our ſelves with a Humour of this kind; and at the Recommendation of one, who is a great Maſter of theſe Sports, we agreed to play at *Similitudes*, which is, it ſeems, a Game in requeſt; and, as I imagine, took its Riſe from ſome Well-wiſher to *Modern Comedy*. The Method of it is this; a Director is choſen, who preſides at the Board, and appoints the Theme or Subject for the reſt of the Company to work upon, by thinking on ſome one Perſon or Thing, and demanding of every one preſent what it is like, without diſcloſing the Object of his Thoughts, till each Member of the Society has named his Similitude; that done, the Director or Chairman publiſhes what he thought on, and calls upon every one in his turn to make good his Compariſon. The Fetches and Strains of Invention on this occaſion are very diverting, and afford Matter for Mirth as well as Admiration. The Director for the time being is ſole Judge, and after a full Hearing, declares whoſe Similitude appears to be moſt Pat and *Apropos*, whereupon ſome little Prize is aſſign'd to the Victor.

Our firſt Eſſay in this way of Diverſion pleaſed me ſo very well, that if the *Reader* be in as good a Humour as I was at that time, he will not think himſelf ill entertain'd with the Recital. In order to give him a perfect Image of this little Affair, I take leave to call the Company by the following Names.

Athenais, whoſe good Senſe and agreeable Temper procure her the Privilege of leading an Aſſembly on theſe Occaſions, had the Chair for the firſt time, by an unanimous Vote of the Society: Round her ſate *Clymene*, *Daraxa*, *Eubulus*, *Gallus*, *Hyſpalus*, *Mentor*, *Therſides*, *Niſus*, and *Van-urban* the *Dutch* Merchant.

As ſoon as *Athenais* had notified to the Board that ſhe was determined in her Thoughts upon the Subject, the Queſtion went round, and every one was ask'd what it was like? *Clymene* compar'd it to a *Sconce*; *Daraxa* to *Snuff*; *Eubulus* to a *Bog*; *Gallus* to a *Spaniel*; *Hyſpalus* to a *Lock*: *Mentor* to *Don Quixot*; *Therſides* to a *Mat*; *Niſus* to a *Toad*; and *Van-urban* to *Butter*.

When each Perſon preſent had deliver'd his Judgment in this order, *Athenais* declar'd her Thoughts, and named *Faction*, as that Subject ſhe had pitch'd upon; then going round again, demanded of each Member a Reaſon for their ſeveral Compariſons; which they juſtify'd and made good in the following manner:

CLYMENE ſaid, *Faction* was like a *Sconce*, becauſe it reflected upon the Light.

DARAXA urged, That *Faction* was like *Snuff*, valued for being *Muſty*.

EUBULUS pleaded, That *Faction* was like a *Bog*, becauſe whoever came upon't muſt ſink, or keep in Motion.

GALLUS contended, That *Faction* was like a *Spaniel*, becauſe it Fawn'd when it had a mind to come in, and Bark'd when it was utterly excluded.

HYSPALUS ſaid, *Faction* was like a *Lock*, modiſh if made of Braſs, never to come further than the Door, and to be manag'd by a Maſter-Key.

MENTOR compared *Faction* to Don *Quixote*, becauſe it was the compleat Character of *Contagious Lunacy*.

THERSIDES argu'd, that *Faction* was like a *Mat*, made only to be trod upon.

NISUS liken'd it to a *Toad*, becauſe it had a wide Mouth, quick Eyes, and a Belly full of Poiſon: It ſubſiſted upon the thinneſt Diet; and whenever it complained, 'twas always a ſign of good Weather.

VAN-URBAN (who came laſt) compar'd *Faction* to *Butter*, becauſe too much Fire ſpoiled its Conſiſtency.

Upon the ſumming up of the ſeveral Performances, *Athenais*, whoſe way of Thinking lies pretty much out of the common Road, deliver'd her Judgment in Words to this Effect; *That ſhe was well enough acquainted with the* Genius *of her own Countrymen, who were always diſpoſed to be ſatisfied with the bare Merit and Applauſe due to a happy Thought and lively Invention; but in a Contention, where it was hard to diſtinguiſh any Superior Excellence, ſhe deſired leave to add good Manners to the Company's Wit*; and ſo, without any further Ceremony, gave the *Prize* to the *Dutchman*.

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